

MEMORANDUM

U.S. Department of Homeland Security



FEMA

DATE: 07-15-06

MEMORANDUM

**FOR: Search Working Group
Chair**

**CALL DATES 07-11-06
OR
07-13-06**

FROM: Canine Subcommittee

SUBJECT: Canine Subcommittee Evaluator Conference Call Minutes

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

CALL DATE(s) >> July 11 & 13 2006		
Member	July 11	July 13
Teresa MacPherson, Chair (Moderator)	Y	Y
John Dean	N	Y
Joe Caputo	Y	Y
Mike Marks	Y	Y
Cathy Schiltz	Y	Y
Debra Tosch	Y	Y
Jen Massey, Scribe	Y	Y

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EVALUATOR ATTENDANCE

July 11	Y/N	July 13	Y/N
Mike Agnew	Y	Sharon Gattas	Y
Jackie McCarty	Y	Linda Neimeier	Y
Carla Collins	Y	Lette Birn	Y
Susann Brown	Y	Tracy McDonald	Y
Julie Noyes	Y	Susan Martinez	Y
Sam Balsam	Y	Elena Lopez de Mesa	Y
Hilda Wood	Y	Sonja Heritage	Y
Rose De Luca	Y	Z. Perez	Y
Lee Turner	Y	Ron Sanders	Y
Shirley Hammond	Y	Jeaneen McKinney	Y
Gary Hay	Y	Cindy Fajardo	Y
Lee Dunn	Y	Bob Sessions	Y
Rox Dunn	Y	Lisa Berry	Y
Kristian Catapano	Y	Tony Zintsmaster	Y
Karen Meadows	Y	Teresa Ortenburger	Y
Anne McCurdy	Y	John Preston	Y
Lynne Englebert	Y	Rex Ianson	Y
Bob Deeds	Y	Tony Favara	Y
Sally Timms	Y	Craig Radleman	Y
Amy Rising	Y	Ron Wechbacker	Y
Steve Dolezal	Y	Deborah Burnett	Y

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Teresa MacPherson: Program Update

- **Evaluators**
- **2006 stats**
- **2007 Proposed Calendar**
- **Future—shift to TF responsibility**

Joe Caputo: Appeal Process

Evaluation Process—changes

- **Darren: Eliciting the alert**
- **Mike: Documentation**
- **Mike: Staging management**
- **Mike: Limited Access – placement of interview evaluator**
- **Debra: Test objectives per pile**
- **JD: New Score Sheet**
- **JD: Safety Briefing replacing interview**
- **JD: Search markings & mapping**

Evaluation Process—projected changes under discussion

- **All: Terminology**

Questions and answers:

Evaluator Conference Call – July 11, 2006

1. Lynn – Because it is an “official document”, when someone changes/deletes something on the test form, the change/deletion should be crossed out with a single line.
2. LaFond – in Washington they use weatherproof paper. Because of the weather only pencil works – Lee Turner – there is a pen that will work on this type of paper.
3. Suzanne Brown – Clarify moving of the flag. Can a handler move an alert flag? Allowed if they move it on the same victim?
Answer: If a handler flags an alert he cannot take it up and move it – a flag laid is a flag played. Handler may verbalize why he wishes to do move it, though.
4. Rose Deluca – Does commitment to scent source stay on the FSA score sheet?
Answer: Yes.
5. Shirley Hammond – Is the handler allowed to reward the dog at the bark barrel?
Answer: Yes, this was included in the January 2006 revision.
6. Gary Hay – Wants all evaluators/handlers to email their representatives to keep “Eliciting” the bark on the test – he does not want this removed. He also wants search marking to be done at every pile.
7. Ann McCurdy – If anyone disagrees with anything they definitely need to email their representative.
8. Lynn Englebert – Very concerned about removing the commitment to scent source. Failure to remove commitment to scent source is not fair to the victim. Need to write a definition. Also does not want to remove the interview – the items covered in the interview are important for each handler to know before they work an area especially from a safety aspect for the handler and dog. Make the interview interesting to the handler – not just a box check.
9. Pat Grant – When changes to the DSCREP are done mid-year can the sub-committee prepare a replacement page and send to all evaluators and handlers?

Answer: A cover sheet of changes is posted on both disasterdog.org and disasterhelp.org.

10. LaFond – If there are not enough teams for a two day test can we use the second day for a CP?

Answer: Yes, there should be a training day on the second day if there are not enough teams to test two days.

Cross out commitment to scent source on the score sheet?

Answer: Yes, cross this out on the score sheet for the July CE.

11. Sam Balsam – Getting rid of the interview – we are not testing the interview, we are testing handlers ability to read a card. This should be handled at the task force level.
12. Elizabeth Krietler – Example of how handlers are just reading the card – interview not really being tested.
13. Gary Hay – Having to become an instructor to be an evaluator? Need to put out criteria to become an instructor so everyone knows what they need to do. Do not have to be a good instructor to be a good evaluator.
14. Bob – Will the instructor criteria definitely be a requirement?
Answer: No. The CSC is considering it, especially for the CPs.

Evaluator Conference Call – July 13, 2006

1. Susan Martinez – Put specific questions in a one line statement?
2. Jeannine McKinney – Will the false alert be taken out of the CE?
Answer: Correct, no false alerts allowed.
3. Bob Sessions – Where are the certificates?
Answer: FEMA Program Office said they will get caught up (they are back-logged a year).
4. Tony Zintmaster – If we are going to remove the dedication to the alert we need to change the criteria we are going to evaluate. Cannot remove something from the test without compensating for it.
5. Teresa Ottenberger – Does not agree with allowing handlers to elicit the bark – she thinks it is appalling.
6. Elena – What is the process for making these decisions (r.e., changes to the CE)?
Answer: The CSC has been charged with removing subjectivity from the test at the request of the Training Working Group and the Operations Group. The CSC comes to a consensus, submits the revision in the form of a recommendation to the Operations Group (composed of all of the Working Group Chairs). It then goes out for review to the TFLs and back to the Program Office and FEMA Advisory Committee, ultimately to become a Program Directive for the system.
7. Susan Martinez – In determining analysis, best to go to people that do this for a living.
8. Lette - If you take out allowing a false alert she does not see a problem allowing the elicit.
9. Pat K. – Does Joe know of some wording (e.g., eliciting) from the law enforcement side (bomb dogs, drugs, etc).
Answer: Evaluators in these disciplines in law enforcement are all on the same page. Many law enforcement agencies train to a higher standard than what is actually required of them.
10. Tony Zintmaster – Have the handler not say anything at all until the dog gives the first bark.
Answer: Handler must be allowed to communicate with his dog during the search. After the first bark, handler can't communicate until there are three barks.
Joe—let the handler make the mistake, he'll never do it again.
11. Craig Radelman – Agrees with Joe – this falls on the handler
12. Rex Ianson – Reducing the number of evaluators on certain piles – is this going to happen?
Answer: It is under discussion. Reasoning – cost.
13. Ron Weckbacher – Too bad that a few dogs are dragging down the system. If the focus was on training the dogs this would not be an issue.
14. Deborah Burnett – The certification is just a marker for her team – it is up to the task force to decide who goes out the door on her team.

15. Elaine – She believes terms are definable and common sense should be used to define them. Need to keep the test document a marker. Elicit the alert is definable and should stay on the test. All of these terms are definable.
16. Mark Dawson – How will the interview be administered at the evaluation? Don't think it is a good idea to do this at the briefing.
Answer: JD – the entire process will be explained at the safety briefing. Reason behind this is that all people do is go down the list of questions – it is a reading exercise not any type of learning experience. Doing this the night before will be a more productive learning experience.
17. Mark Dawson – Evaluators should create a good scenario and then the interview becomes more valuable.
Answer: It will still be the same reading exercise for every FSA, so every handler will do it more than once. For the CE, it will be more real—part of the safety briefing the night before.
18. Randy – Allowing eliciting and removing commitment to scent source reduces the integrity of the test.
19. Sonja – Look at what patrol dogs are asked to do on the street – typically much different than what they are tested for. Train beyond the test.
20. Susan Martinez – Whenever something is defined, this is the protocol for that behavior no matter what it said in the dictionary. Put it on the task force to decide who is deployed.
21. Sonja – Canine coordinator and task force should decide who is qualified to deploy and be responsible for the effective pairing up of dogs.
22. Julie Noyes – Defining terms – can the subcommittee put together a definition and let the rest of the evaluators agree on it.
Answer: The CSC is attempting to get constructive definitions for the terms from in-system and out-of-system and will determine how to proceed.
Removing commitment to scent source and moving interview to briefing – has this happened?
Answer: Yes, both of these have happened.
23. Mark Dawson – To avoid last minute changes is there a way to reach evaluators prior to a test to let them know what is going on?
Answer: Yes, we will make sure the evaluators are informed.