



**MEMORANDUM**

**FOR: Search Working Group  
Chair**

**DATE: 08Sept10**

**FROM: Canine Sub-Group**

**SUBJECT: Minutes of Canine Coordinator Telecon Facilitated by the Canine Sub-Group**

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

<b>DATE: September 8, 2010</b> <b>Call #9</b>	
<b>Sub-Group Member</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Teresa MacPherson, Chair	Y
John Dean	Y
Susann Brown	N
Mike Marks	Y
Debra Tosch	Y
Darren Bobrosky	Y

## COORDINATOR ATTENDANCE

TF	Canine Coordinator
AZ-TF1	John Dean
CA-TF1	Deresa Teller
CA-TF2	Bill Monahan (absent)
CA-TF3	Chantal Rose
CA-TF4	Darren Bobrosky
CA-TF5	Marc Valentine
CA-TF6	Sheila McKee
CA-TF7	David Stoddard (absent)
CA-TF8	Steve Swaney
CO-TF1	Rox Dunn
FL-TF1	Mike Marks
FL-TF2	Brian Smithey (for Craig Radelman)
IN-TF1	Anne McCurdy
MA-TF1	Lee Prentiss
MD-TF1	John Gilkey/Mike Berry
MO-TF1	Elidora Chamberlain
NE-TF1	Steve Dolezal
NM-TF1	Lette Birn
NV-TF1	Bryan Morgan
NY-TF1	Scott Mateyaschuk
OH-TF1	Melissa Newman

## COORDINATOR ATTENDANCE, cont.

TF	Canine Coordinator
PA-TF1	Jeff Snyder (absent)
TN-TF1	Deborah Burnett
TX-TF1	Susann Brown (absent)
UT-TF1	John Magner
VA-TF1	Buck Best
VA-TF2	Ray Irizarry
WA-TF1	Cyndie Fajardo

## AGENDA ITEMS/DISCUSSION

### Roll Call

### Program Updates

### 2011 Canine Calendar

### 2010 Task Force Survey

### Vet support/health insurance update

### OH-TF1 drill review (Melissa Newman, OH-TF1)

### Protective vest review (Ray Irizarry, VA-TF2)

### Other

- Haiti Video available
- Request for updated CSS pack list
- DisasterDog website

## PROPOSED ACTIONS

### Roll Call

- 24 out of the 28 Task Forces were represented

### Program Updates

- Current Stats
  - Certified teams as well as actual resources still going up
    - Dec 09=248/217
    - July 10=267/231
  - But OREs show deployable resources much less
    - CSG asked for reasons why certified teams are not deployable
    - No training issues with Tech Rescue Skill sets or HMFRO, but some TFs have additional requirements for deployability
    - A few injuries (dog or handler)
  - Pass rate down from 74% (Dec '09) to 72% (June '10)
    - Expect it may continue to go down
    - So few options teams are testing before they are ready
    - Between June '10 and April '11, (9 months), one test in NY and one in WA (if no tests in first quarter again)
  - Cost issues with less test options
    - Teams recerting up to 6 months early (we lose the cost-effectiveness of the 3 yr recert and team loses certification early if they do not pass)
    - Teams testing far from home (no test in Central for 9 months, if no tests in first quarter again)
  - Evaluator issues with less test options
    - Some evaluators need to test and evaluate same test (not permitted) – so they stand to lose certification or lose evaluator status
    - Some evaluators have not had any opportunities this year and are expiring at the end of the year
- Evaluator status
  - Expiration “year” – evaluators will expire in the December of their expiration year (all who evaluate in 2010, regardless of what month, will have an expiration date of Dec 2012)
  - Every year new Evaluator Groups are created based on number of events
  - This year Groups and Alternate Pool ordered by date-last-evaluated and two new evaluators were incorporated
  - Currently, 12 evaluators will expire in Dec 2010
    - Several options were discussed to maintain certified teams as well as to enable evaluators to maintain status (Equivalent CE's, extensions, shadows counting towards maintaining status) – none approved for various reasons

- Solution - Expiring evaluators are given opportunities in the next three events
    - No expense to host or financial impact on other evaluators
    - All affected evaluators have been notified, as well as CC's, PM's, hosts and Chiefs and all are supportive
- Reserve Pool for expired evaluators
  - Evaluators will retain title and able to conduct TF-level evals
  - Will not be a part of the national rotation while in Reserve Pool
  - Do not yet know how "active" status will be regained
- TFLs will advise as to future number of tests/evaluators, when a budget figure comes in
  - CSG submitted numbers to support 9 CEs, 2 CPs
  - If those numbers are met, there's no evaluator problem, other than reserve pool (may need a recommendation and that takes time)
  - If the tests are cut again, the TFLs will discuss how to trim the cadre
- All Canine Coordinators are invited to the upcoming evaluator telecons
- Certification Evaluations
  - WA CE in Oct
    - FULL, if those on stand-by successfully complete FSA
  - NY CE in Nov
    - Announcement came out today (Sept 8) – expect it to be FULL
- Certification Preparations
  - CA-TF3 CP in Dec
    - Several informal requests to convert to CE
    - Canine Coordinators to give Teresa numbers by Friday, Sept 10, as to how many teams would be sent to a CE or a CP
      - If CE, include whether the team(s) is new or a recert
    - If the numbers support the conversion, CA-TF3 may submit a request to the Program Office (Joe)
- Applications
  - Apps are accepted as soon as the announcement is distributed
    - Receipt of the application confirmed by email
  - Teams are not selected to participate until after due date to ensure system needs are met, in the event there are more apps than slots
  - Selected teams and their Task Forces will be notified of their test day at least 30 days in advance to allow enough time for travel arrangements
  - Selection is prioritized first by recert date, second by TF need for certified teams, then by equitable distribution
  - Only completed apps are accepted (FSA must be completed)
  - Apps may be accepted after the due date, if there is room
  - Apps must be legible – please type

- Need for CSSTs
  - Please send numbers as to how many Handlers/STMs needing the course
  - TX-TF1 is hosting a course in Dec and requesting Equivalency
    - Question as to possibility that it may be “sanctioned” so as to give workers comp to TF members [subsequently confirmed that it will remain an “equivalency” request]
- CSG Recommendations
  - **CSSC Annex** to the National US&R Response System Operations Manual – Program Directive 2010-09 (formerly the CSSCP)
    - Distributed to system in July
    - Any and all changes must go through the approval process
    - CSG can’t make exceptions, give waivers, extensions, etc
    - Substantive changes
      - FSA evaluators – one evaluator and CC or designee who:
        - a. Must be rostered on a DHS/FEMA Task Force
        - b. Must have been a Canine Search Specialist or STM for at least three years
        - c. Must have completed the Canine Search Specialist Training Course
      - SOPs incorporated
      - Evaluator compensation spelled out – ceiling raised.  
Host will be asked to outline compensation amount and timelines before asking for confirmation from evaluators.
    - Policy document eliminated – all are incorporated or dismissed
      - Testing dogs-in-season issue dropped
      - Vet letter not required for dog over 10 yrs (PO said not needed, TF issue)
      - Search-site size increase Rec did not pass.  
Remains at 6K – 15K for CE (the average site is 10K according to past AARs)
  - 2010 recs to be presented at Ops Group next month
    - K9 Transport
      - Failed in 2006, but has been resurrected at the request of several TFLs
      - Gives option to use existing vehicles or to purchase canine vehicle within certain parameters
    - Pre-mission vet check
      - Mandates a quick vet exam before deployment, much like our medical check-in

## **2011 Canine Calendar**

- The following Task Forces have sites (or access to sites) for 2011:  
AZ, CA1, CA3, CA5, CA6, CO, FL1, FL2, IN, MD, MA, MO, NV, NY, OH, TN, TX, UT, VA2, WA (Please advise as to any changes)
- The following Task Forces have not hosted in the past two years, since 2008  
CA5, CA6, CO, FL1, IN, MD, TX, UT (New host)
- This information will be submitted for consideration in creating the next activity calendar

## **2010 Task Force Survey**

- Needs to be completed by Oct 29 for November TFL meeting
- Please email responses to Debra or she can gather information from you over the phone. (debra@ndsdf.org)
- New survey items per request of TFLs, Canine Coordinators, Program Office
  - Health insurance for canines – what kind
  - Number of FSA-only dogs
  - Formal Training hrs per month average
  - Task Force or Sponsoring Agency use k9 teams for local or outside call-outs?

## **Vet support/health insurance update**

- Pet wellness reports and blood-work will continue free of charge for those insured with Purina (vets get reimbursed by Purina)
- Make sure to get the 10% discount as well an additional discount if register as TF, rather than as an individual
- Contact for Purina – Gabe Silva: [gabriel.silva@purinacare.com](mailto:gabriel.silva@purinacare.com), 877 878 7462 X0481
- Purina Care Plus Preventative Care seems to be best for us (similar to PetsBest)
- In Jan, Pet Health Systems plans to add new certified dogs for the blood-work needed to apply for insurance with Purina, pending their budget (will know in Nov)

## **OH-TF1 drill review (Melissa Newman, OH-TF1)**

- Exercise with the military simulating a large-scale nuclear event
- Worked a site where many individuals were “trapped” in buildings.
- All participants (including handlers) were dressed in full gear to include respirators.
- Dogs did not have any issues with “strange” appearance of geared-up people, but they did have some problems hearing commands due to handler’s respirator. Handlers relied a lot on hand signals.
  - Lesson Learned – train in respirator and make sure dog knows hand signals
- Military did not have a lot of experience with decon for animals. Dogs were uncomfortable with the decon process when the handler was not present but if the handler was present they were much more comfortable.
  - Lesson Learned – practice canine decon in training

### **Protective vest review (Ray Irizarry, VA-TF2)**

- Made of kevlar, weighs about 1.5 pounds and works best if the vest is custom fitted to the dog.
- The vest provides the protection for the belly and chest area of the dog and can be used as a travel vest and a lifting harness (lifting ring is very strong).
- The vest did not seem to hinder the dog's movement at all.
- The cost for a custom fit vest is approximately \$1,000 (no custom-fit is a little cheaper)
- Website is [www.k9storm.com](http://www.k9storm.com).
- Teresa will forward the PowerPoint presentation to Canine Coordinators [done]
- CSG requests feedback for consideration for addition to cache

### **Other**

- Haiti Video available
  - After soliciting info from those who deployed as well as questions from those who did not, Debra T spearheaded a project to create a video of the Haiti deployment, which is now complete.
  - When each Coordinator sends in the survey to Debra, please include a mailing address and the number of copies requested, if it varies from the number on the Certified Teams roster.
  - At no charge, Debra will mail CD's for your TF handlers
- Request for updated CSS pack list
  - Please email examples of your TF canine pack list to share
- DisasterDog website
  - Articles welcome, especially those celebrating our canines
  - Alternative to HSIN, but HSIN is official site where rosters, AARs and announcements are posted
  - Reminder that Canine Coordinators are the information pipeline for their handlers
- Upcoming FSAs (contact Canine Coordinator to inquire about availability)
  - WA-TF1 – 11 September
  - OH-TF1 – 18 September
  - MA-TF1 – 26 September
  - NE-TF1 – 26 September
  - MO-TF1 – 23 October
  - TN-TF1 – 8 November