

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Washington, D.C.

20472



FEMA

For: Jim Ingledue
Search Work Group Chair

From: Teresa MacPherson
Canine Sub-Group Chair

Date: May 4, 2010

Re: Sub-Group Meeting Minutes

Please find the attendance and agenda items addressed at the recent Canine Sub-Group meeting conducted at Virginia Beach, Virginia:

MEETING DATE(s) >>		May 6 & 7, 2010	
MEMBERSHIP / ATTENDANCE			
Teresa MacPherson, Chair			
Member	Y/N	Member	Y/N
John Dean (Vice Chair)	Y	Jim Ingledue (SWG Chair)	Y
Mike Marks	Y	Rory Rehbeck (SWG guest)	Y
Debra Tosch	Y	Ray Irizarry (VA-TF2 guest)	Y
Darren Bobrosky	Y	Dean Scott (Program Office)	Y
Susann Brown	N	Jen Massey (Scribe)	Y
		Peter Sellas (CA-TF6 guest)	Y

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AGENDA ITEMS/DISCUSSION

DAY ONE

- Welcome
- Updates
- Deborah Burnett new Lead Evaluator
- Request to apply to test canine 1 week short of 18 months
- Three-day test
- NV CE
- CSST course site requirements
- Position Description
- Rosters
- Evaluator Roles and Responsibilities
- Canine Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities
- Task Force Survey for 2010
- 2009 Recommendations
- Haiti review

DAY TWO

- Website
- Annual Document review
- Canine Coordinator Telecon topics
- Evaluator Telecons
- Misc/Other
- Dates for next calls/meetings

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PROPOSED ACTIONS

DAY ONE

■ Welcome

- Chief Cover welcomed the CSG to Virginia Beach

■ Updates

- Dean Scott – Program Office report
 - A protocol for addressing system issues has been developed by Command and General Staff. Upon final approval of this protocol, issues will be routed through the chain of command and will be appropriately tasked and tracked. (Canine issues will be routed through the TF chain of command and brought to the CSG from the Task Force Leader)
 - CSG in the past has addressed all issues it has received directly from Canine Coordinators and published the results in the minutes of telecons and/or meetings
 - The change in personnel at the Program Office is still underway and has not been finalized.
 - HSIN (Homeland Security Information Network) is the site for all FEMA US&R information, including Directives, Recommendations, etc.
<https://government.hsin.gov>.
 - Relationship between FEMA and SUSAR – FEMA is building a relationship with SUSAR and addressing issues at higher levels. Currently, all FEMA equivalent courses still require all FEMA rostered Instructors.
 - FEMA US&R response to International deployments - Possible that it could happen again, especially for “close-in” incidents (Caribbean, South America, etc.). Final Haiti comments due back from all TFs at the end of last week. Final Haiti AAR should be out soon. All concerns will be addressed.
- Teresa – K9 10-01 status
 - This recommendation combines the CSSCP and the SOPs into one complete document
 - Proposed changes are highlighted in the updated document
 - The new FSA evaluator requirement (at least one rostered evaluator, the other may be the Canine Coordinator or his designee)
 - Evaluator maximum compensation raised
 - Recommendation has been through the pre-read phase and is now in the Ops Group for the vote. The 21-day review will follow and upon approval will be submitted to the Program Office for final approval and Directive.
- Jim & Rory – Search Working Group report
 - Face-to-Face meeting in June in Boston, agenda to include
 - Search Planning & Management course
 - Definition of “completed search” vs. “completed task”
 - Type/color of search sticker
 - Position Description
 - Requested to readdress CSST course for STMs (required or recommended?)

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- Federal SAR Schools by the Coast Guard – researching some of these courses and possibly recommending them
 - GIS Seminar will be held on Monday before the meeting
- Review CDTFL concerns
 - The Central Division Task Force Leaders are planning to make the following recommendations
 - Term limits for Work Group members and Evaluators
 - Resource sharing
 - CSG discussed alternatives for Evaluator term limits, realizing the reduction in CE's/CP's have resulted in even less opportunities for current evaluators and little opportunities for new blood
 - CSG discussed the pros and cons of resource sharing. CDTFLs asked for the position of the CSG and we will further address when the recommendation is available.
 - CDTFLs inquired about the impact of the cut in CE's/CPs.
 - The numbers are already down for the first time in years due to the lack of tests in the first quarter.
 - Expect the numbers and pass rates to decrease. Teams have less options and will likely test early, before they are ready.
 - Expect TFs to be adversely affected for deployability. A team has recently requested to test 1 week shy of the 18 month age restriction at the June test. The rule leaves no room for exceptions, but this has never been a problem in the past. Due to lack of tests, this team will not be able to test before hurricane season.
 - Expect teams to test early to save on costs. A team recently tested 6 months early because it was the only test in his area (there are no tests in CA this year). The team passed, but this results in a 2.5 yr certification, rather than the (cost-efficient) 3 yr certification. Had the team failed, they would have lost 6 months of certification.
 - Expect increased costs to test due to lack of options – many teams will have to travel farther to test.
 - Evaluators now have even less opportunities to remain current or to gain Lead status. Very little opportunity for new blood.
 - CDTFLs inquired about the request made to the CSG to research additional ways to reduce test costs.
 - The CSG addressed this issue at their meeting last year and reaffirm that costs are at a minimum to meet the current standard.
- Deborah Burnett (TN-TF1), handler
 - Approved as a Lead Evaluator (previously approved by email)
- Request to apply to test canine 1 week short of 18 months
 - The CSG cannot waive this requirement
 - Any changes to the CSSCP must be done through the recommendation process

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- Discussed 3-day test
 - Cost efficient, but funding to host TF would need to be increased
 - Provides more testing opportunities
 - Physically and mentally taxing for evaluators
 - Does not add any location options
 - Does not add any additional evaluator opportunities

- Review of NV CE
 - Pass Rate 68%
 - Four false alerts failed teams who otherwise would have passed (both food and clothes)
 - Three day test

- Reviewed CSST course site requirements
 - Adjustments made as to format in the new matrix
 - Clarifications made as to the helpers needed in each field exercise
 - Question raised concerning the liability requirements for non-dedicated TF sites – checking with Legal

- Reviewed Position Description
 - All Work Groups requested to review “Required” vs “Recommended” under position-specific
 - CSG decided to leave PD as is – the requirements are minimal

- Reviewed Rosters
 - Canine
 - Evaluator
 - Shadow (none in progress)
 - Canine Coordinator
 - Instructor
 - Mentor
 - Approved Greg Strickland, FL-TF1

- Reviewed Evaluator Roles and Responsibilities
 - No change

- Reviewed Canine Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities
 - No change

- Reviewed Task Force Survey for 2010
 - New questions as submitted by various TF members
 - Under Canine Benefits
 - K9s insured through PetsBest/Purina/VPI/Other
 - Under Certified teams
 - Number of FSA only level teams

- Canine Transport Rec
 - At the April 2009 meeting, the CSG incorporated changes generated by comments at the last Ops Group meeting. Prepared to submit at next Ops Group meeting.

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- Pre and post mission vet exam
 - Decided to move forward with the pre-mission exam
 - Post – mission exams have not been a problem
- Haiti review
 - Debra is collecting input from those TFs that responded and will be creating a DVD for posting on the website. It will also include questions from those TF members who did not respond.
 - The DART limited the number of individuals that were able to deploy with the IST – this was the reason a vet was not deployed with the IST.
 - The US&R Vet group has a vet course specifically designed for US&R Medical Specialists caring for our canines on deployment. Contact Lori Gordon, MA-TF1.
 - CSG will suggest addition of a K-9 care course as “recommended” for Medical Specialists

DAY TWO

- Website
 - Reviewed disasterdog site and updated
- Annual Document review
 - Mission Statement – no changes
 - CSSCP – update is at Ops Group for vote
 - Policies – none, in CSSCP or SOPs
 - SOPs - update is at Ops Group for vote
 - Apps/Forms – no changes
 - Peer Reviews – no changes
 - Shadow Package – no changes
 - CE/CP Orientation – no changes
 - Pre-evaluation call template – no changes
- Canine Coordinator Telecon topics
 - Career ending canine injuries/safety
 - Lessons Learned suggestions
 - Training on lead (harness),
 - Not jumping through ground-level windows in training (ie, PD agility courses and/or buildings)
 - Research adding tracking harness to cache list
 - Review TF survey
 - Debra will distribute for completion after input from the Canine Coordinator call
 - Haiti review/use of canines
 - Health insurance
 - Solicit for articles for disasterdog
- Evaluator Telecons
 - No changes to report - On hold until after the next set of Ops Group and TFL meetings

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■ Misc/Other

- Suggestion to investigate removing the FSA completely
 - CSG does not believe that would be in the system's best interest at this time
- Suggestion to allow food reward on the FSA
 - Discussed – unanimous not to make this change at this time
- NVRS and HSUS
 - Want to provide veterinary assistance to all of ESF9 teams (not only FEMA US&R) during deployments
 - Dean is going to meet with these groups regarding the type of support they can provide. Meeting will be held in DC, Dean will meet with them initially and then will probably set up another meeting and ask Teresa or another designated person to attend.
- K9 Death
 - Dean will forward Teresa copy of the report regarding the recent K9 death during training.
 - Dean would like CSG to provide a summary opinion after reviewing the report.
 - Is this a system-wide training issue?
 - What other similar incidents have occurred?
 - Is this a system-wide pattern or an anomaly?
 - How many hours of training occur system-wide during any given month?
- Cache List
 - Reviewed
 - Peter S. will send the CSG cache change form to add harness and soft crates

■ Dates for next calls/meetings

- Next CSG call – TBD
- Next Canine Coordinator call
 - 8 September 2010 @ 1400 EDT
- Next Evaluator call - TBD
- Next Face-to-Face CSG meeting
 - April 2011, Phoenix, AZ

NOTE: The current financial climate has resulted in cancelled/postponed meetings of the Work Groups, Ops Group and TFLs. While the system is in a slow-down due to budget cuts, the CSG is scheduling telecons for the Sub-Group, Evaluators and Canine Coordinators on an as-needed basis.