

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

***NATIONAL
URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE
RESPONSE SYSTEM***

A Component of the National Response Plan
Emergency Support Function # 9



FEMA

**CANINE SEARCH SPECIALIST
POSITION DESCRIPTION**

**National Urban Search & Rescue Response System
Canine Search Specialist Position Description**

General Requirements

1. Must be able to meet the physical requirements of the sponsoring agency with or without accommodations.
2. Must be available on short notice to mobilize within six hours of request and be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours for a response assignment of up to 10 days in austere environments.
3. Must be capable of improvising and functioning for long hours under adverse conditions.
4. Must maintain current inoculations for Diphtheria/Tetanus (or Tetanus only if there is a contra-indication to Diphtheria), Hepatitis A & B, Measles/Mumps/Rubella (if born after 1957), and Polio.
5. Must be able to function safely at heights and on or around rubble.
6. Must be aware of the signs, symptoms and corrective measures of critical incident stress syndrome.
7. Must understand and adhere to safe working practices and procedures as required in the urban disaster environment.
8. Must have a working knowledge of FEMA's US&R Response System, organizational structure, operating procedures, safety practices, terminology, knowledge of all task force equipment, and communications protocols.
9. Must have successfully completed the First Responder Operations Level for Hazardous Materials as per OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1910.120 Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response.
10. Must be currently certified in America Heart Association (or equivalent) Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation - Basic Life Support.
11. Must have a working knowledge of the Incident Command System including successful completion of the IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800 on-line courses.
12. Successful completion of the DHS/FEMA US&R Orientation Course or equivalent.
13. Successful completion of Respiratory Protection training and quantitative fit test per 29 CFR 1910.134
14. Successful completion of the DOJ Emergency Response to Terrorism, Basic Concepts or equivalent.
15. Successful completion of the FEMA/US&R WMD Enhanced Operations
16. Successful completion of Awareness Level training per NFPA 1670 including;
 - Confined Space Operations

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- Water Rescue Operations
 - Structural Collapse Operations
17. Successful completion of GPS Awareness Level course (Garmin V or comparable)
 18. Must understand the needs of and provide support to their counterparts within the task force for specific operations, techniques and application of tools and equipment.
 19. Must possess training and experience in personal safety in US&R environments.
 20. The authority having jurisdiction shall assure that the individual meets or exceeds the required knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's).

Position Specific Requirements

CANINE SEARCH SPECIALIST

The Canine Search Specialist is responsible for working with a search dog and reports to the Search Team Manager. He/she is also responsible for the care and welfare of the canines during mission deployment.

Description of Duties

The Canine Search Specialist is responsible for:

- Searching structures, in US&R environments or other locations indicated in the mission assignment, using appropriate canine search equipment and techniques.
- Documenting locations of alerts and, if possible, triaging the status of victims for rescue.
- Adhering to all safety procedures.
- Cooperating with and assisting other search and rescue resources.
- Providing accountability, maintenance, and minor repairs for all issued equipment.
- Performing additional tasks or duties as assigned during a mission.

Position Requirements and Criteria

Individuals who meet the following requirements and criteria will be eligible to become Canine Search Specialists in the FEMA US&R Response System. The intent of these requirements is to select handlers fully capable of providing the search techniques and

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tactics required in the urban disaster environment. The requirements and criteria for the position are identified in the following categories:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Abilities

Knowledge

The Canine Search Specialist must have:

1. Practical knowledge of general search strategy and tactics.
2. Practical knowledge of the technical aspects of search theory.
3. Practical knowledge of the theory and techniques of searching collapsed structures.
4. Practical knowledge of canine first aid.
5. Current certification as a FEMA Canine Search Specialist Team.
6. Successfully completed the FEMA Canine Search Specialist Course.

Skills

The Canine Search Specialist must:

1. Have experience as a task dog handler/trainer (police, SAR, guide, etc.).
2. Have an understanding of canine search operations including team size, check and recheck procedures, and observer responsibilities.
3. Be competent in canine search handling.
4. Completed Basic Rescue Module (Appendix A) consisting of Confined Space (entrant), Basic Rope Rescue, and Trench awareness.

Abilities

The Canine Search Specialist must:

1. Be able to support the search team with the canine resource.
2. Be able to operate safely in adverse environments, including swift water.
3. Be able to interpret canine behavior and report those results.

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4. Be able to assist in additional Task Force activities that may arise during a mission.
5. Be able to account for, maintain and utilize issued equipment.
6. Be able to assist the medical specialist in canine care.

General Operational Checklist

UPON ACTIVATION / AT TASK FORCE ASSEMBLY POINT

- Receive notification of assignment and instructions from the initiating organization.
- Establish communications with the appropriate supervisor.
- Monitor mission-related information from local sources such as radio and television.
- Review the personal equipment checklist.
- Ensure that you have personal daypack, ear plugs, and warm clothes for flight.
- Report to the assigned Assembly Point at the prescribed time.
- Forward an accurate Responder Information Sheet to the Medical Team Manager.
- Complete check-in procedures to include medical screening.
- Ensure that you receive any appropriate issue of gear (radio, functional vest, etc.) pertinent to the position.
- Participate in task force briefings and meetings as requested.
- Carry out assignments as directed.
- Must not be under the influence of illegal substances or alcohol for the duration of the deployment.

AT POINT OF DEPARTURE

- Participate in task force briefings and meetings as requested.
- Carry out assignments as directed.
- Ensure that electronic equipment is turned off prior to boarding aircraft.

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IN TRANSIT

- ❑ Review the FEMA US&R Field Operations Guide for information pertinent to your position description, operational checklist, operational procedures, and safety procedures.
- ❑ Monitor mission-related information from local sources such as radio and television.
- ❑ Review disaster related information, as it becomes available.
- ❑ Take advantage of available travel time for rest prior to arrival.
- ❑ Carry out assignments as directed.

ARRIVAL AT MOBILIZATION CENTER

- ❑ Participate in task force briefings and meetings as requested.
- ❑ Carry out assignments as directed.

ON-SITE OPERATIONS

- ❑ Ensure your physical readiness through proper nutrition, water intake, rest, and stress control techniques.
- ❑ Participate in the task force daily briefings and meetings as requested.
- ❑ Ensure use of all safety practices and procedures.
- ❑ Ensure proper equipment needs are met and equipment is operational prior to each work period.
- ❑ Carry out assignments as directed.
- ❑ Report any signs/symptoms of incident stress, injury, fatigue, or illness in yourself/coworkers to your immediate supervisor.
- ❑ Brief your shift replacement fully on all ongoing operations when relieved at work cycle rotations.
- ❑ Prepare appropriate reports (i.e. Unit Logs ICS-214, etc.).

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REASSIGNMENT/DEMOBILIZATION

- ❑ Participate in the task force daily briefings and meetings as requested.
- ❑ Prepare personal belongings for demobilization.
- ❑ Carry out assignments as directed.
- ❑ Ensure the return of all items issued to you during the mobilization phase.
- ❑ Upon return, participate in the task force mission critique and incident stress management activities.
- ❑ Submit comments to your supervisor for inclusion in the after-action reports. This should include reviewing pertinent position descriptions, operational checklists, and procedures for recommended changes.

Position Specific Operational Checklist

CANINE SEARCH SPECIALIST

The purpose of this checklist is to define the duties and responsibilities of the Canine Search Specialist during mission operations. The list is intended to be a general summary of actions. It should be understood that:

- 1) Some required actions may not be listed, but must be identified and assumed by this position.
- 2) Some actions may be the primary responsibility of another task force position, but may require assistance and coordination from this position.
- 3) The actions are listed in a general chronological order, but may require deviation.

UPON ACTIVATION / AT TASK FORCE ASSEMBLY POINT

- ❑ Ensure the readiness of your canine (health, fitness, hygiene, diet, etc.) for travel, including all specialized gear and equipment. Ensure the availability of canine securing harness, crate, hearing protection, and floor pad for travel on aircraft.
- ❑ Ensure possession of USDA Canine health certificate issued by a licensed veterinarian.
- ❑ Ensure possession of DOD flight letter for canine.
- ❑ Monitor the canine for adequate rest, injuries, stress, or fatigue. Report any deficiencies to the Search Team Manager and ensure a safe and secure place for the canine.

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AT POINT OF DEPARTURE

- ❑ Ensure the canines have an opportunity to relieve themselves immediately prior to departure.
- ❑ Ensure proper canine etiquette such as cleanliness, non-aggressive behavior toward other personnel or canines, etc.
- ❑ Monitor the canine for adequate rest, injuries, stress, or fatigue. Report any deficiencies to the Search Team Manager and ensure a safe and secure place for the canine.

IN TRANSIT

- ❑ Ensure canine is properly secured during take off and landing.
- ❑ Monitor the canine for adequate rest, injuries, stress, or fatigue. Report any deficiencies to the Search Team Manager and ensure a safe and secure place for the canine at all times.

ARRIVAL AT MOBILIZATION CENTER

- ❑ Ensure that veterinarian services are available for problems that may occur within the disaster area.
- ❑ Monitor the canine for adequate rest, injuries, stress, or fatigue. Report any deficiencies to the Search Team Manager and ensure a safe and secure place for the canine at all times.

ON-SITE OPERATIONS

- ❑ Keep the Search Team Manager apprised of any tactical accomplishments, supply deficiencies, or equipment malfunctions.
- ❑ Monitor the canine for adequate rest, injuries, stress, or fatigue. Report any deficiencies to the Search Team Manager and ensure a safe and secure place when not directly engaged in search operations.

REASSIGNMENT/DEMOBILIZATION

- ❑ Ensure the canines have an opportunity to relieve themselves immediately prior to departure.
- ❑ Prepare the canine for transportation.
- ❑ Notify the Logistics Section of the loss or potential maintenance requirements of any assigned tools and equipment.
- ❑ Monitor the canine for adequate rest, injuries, stress, or fatigue. Report any deficiencies, including subtle signs of stress or injury, to the Search Team Manager and ensure a safe and secure place for the canine at all times.

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Appendix A

Technical Rescue Skill Sets

Minimum skill set recommendations for Task Force Personnel who enter the hazard zone, i.e. forward deployment:

- General Requirements of NFPA 1670
- Rope Rescue awareness per NFPA 1670*
- Trench Rescue awareness per NFPA 1670
- Confined Space Rescue awareness per NFPA 1670
- Structural collapse awareness, NFPA 1670
- Duties of the Entrant per 29 CFR 1910.146
- * Additional Required Rope Rescue skills;
 - Safety considerations during rope rescue operations
 - Characteristics of life safety rope and webbing
 - Application of rope rescue hardware specific to a lowering operation
 - Application of rope rescue hardware and software specific to a belay line
 - Assemble and apply a Class III harness
 - Assemble and apply a “Hasty Harness”
 - Tie a Simple Figure eight knot
 - Tie a Figure Eight follow-through knot
 - Tie an overhand follow-through with webbing
 - Attach a prusik loop to a rope
 - Be familiar with anchor systems
 - Be familiar with raising and lowering systems
 - Proficiency at attaching yourself to, and participating in a raising or lowering system
 - Proficiency at descending and ascending a fixed line, low angle