

**DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

**NATIONAL
URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE
RESPONSE SYSTEM**

**A Component of the National Response Framework
Emergency Support Function # 9**



FEMA

**CANINE SEARCH SPECIALIST
POSITION DESCRIPTION**

National US&R Response System

Task Force Position Descriptions

Canine Search Specialist

Position Specific Requirements

Canine Search Specialist

The Canine Search Specialist is primarily responsible for supporting the Search function with the canine resource. He/she is also responsible for the care and welfare of the canine during mission deployment. The Canine Search Specialist reports to the Search Team Manager.

Description of Duties

The Canine Search Specialist is responsible for:

- Searching disaster environments and locations indicated in the mission assignment, using appropriate canine search equipment and techniques.
- Documenting results of the canine search, including locations of alerts, and routing them appropriately.
- Understanding and accurately interpreting canine's behavior, including knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of search canines.
- Care and welfare of their canine, including assisting the Medical team in the canine's medical care.

National US&R Response System

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Position Requirements and Criteria

Individuals who meet the following requirements and criteria will be eligible to become Canine Search Specialists in the DHS/FEMA US&R Response System. The intent of these requirements are to provide canine teams capable of using the search techniques and tactics required to support the Search function with the canine resource in various disaster environments.

Required Training:

The Canine Search Specialist shall:

1. Meet all General Training requirements
2. Have current certification as a DHS/FEMA Canine Search Specialist Team.
3. Complete the DHS/FEMA Canine Search Specialist Training Course.
4. Have current certification in Basic First Aid, or equivalent.
4. Complete the GPS Awareness Level course
5. Complete the required Technical Rescue Skill Sets as defined in Appendix A of the Position Description Manual.

Recommended Training:

The Canine Search Specialist should have:

1. Completed the DHS/FEMA Technical Search Specialist Course.
2. Completed DHS/FEMA GPS Operations (8 hours)
3. Completed the K-9 Down course (16 hrs, see ***k9down.com***), or equivalent

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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*
- 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