



Virginia Task Force 2 Urban Search and Rescue

Administrative Manual

3.08 Post Mission Canine
Health Assessment

March 2019

Post Mission Canine Health Assessment

ISSUE STATEMENT

The nature of Urban Search and Rescue operations demands US&R Search Canines are often be exposed to hazardous environments. Despite appropriate usage of Operational Safety Practices, it is an unfortunate reality that Search Canines may still encounter significant environmental hazards. Although every effort is made to identify hazards and mitigate exposures, it is impossible to predict in advance all hazardous exposures encountered by Search Canines. To protect the health and well being of all team members, a well coordinated Post Mission Canine Health Assessment Program must be in place.

REQUIRED ACTIONS

- It is the duty of the IST, Task Force Leaders, Hazardous Materials Team, Search Team Manager, Medical Team Manager and Safety Officer to attempt to identify and mitigate all hazards in advance.
- In the event that hazards and exposures are identified during the mission, Canine Search Teams will be required to participate in Post Mission Canine Health Assessment. This will consist of consultation between the IST, Task Force Leaders, Safety officer, Hazardous Materials officer, Medical Team Manager and Search Team Managers. If treatment or other mitigation is required during the deployment, this shall be initiated during the deployment. Post deployment medical treatment, if necessary, will be arranged by the Search Team Manager in consultation with the individual Canine Search team members' Veterinarian or IST Veterinarian. Each Search Canine team handler will be required to submit a Post Mission Health Assessment Form (details below) two weeks of the deployment demobilization.
- In the event that no specific exposures are identified during the deployment, each deployed Search Canine team handler will be required to submit the Post Mission Health Assessment form two weeks of the mission demobilization. These forms will be reviewed by the Team Veterinarian and placed in the canine's medical file. If a pattern of illness or disability emerges from this surveillance, then team members will be directed to each handlers individual Veterinarian for further evaluation.
- Team members must understand that all responses on the Post Mission Canine Health Assessment Form are confidential. All Canine handlers must be encouraged to be honest in their reporting of possible post deployment illness.
- The recommended intervals for submission of Post Mission Canine Health Assessment are: 2 weeks post deployment or additional screening as directed by the team Veterinarian.