

IST Veterinary Officer Role and Responsibilities from the Field

Recommendations are based on 5 deployments as an IST Veterinary Officer for the FEMA USAR System to the following events:

- 2014 SR-530 Oso, WA Landslide
- 2016 Hurricane Matthew
- 2017 Hurricane Maria
- 2018 Hurricane Florence
- 2018 Hurricane Michael

K9 Roster

Develop a K9 roster for the purpose of providing total available numbers of search-specific capabilities currently in theater in a timely manner.

- Handlers may deploy with 2 K9s, therefore one cannot assume a 1:1 ratio Handler to K9
- The emergence of requests for human remains search has increased
- It would be extremely helpful to include deployed K9s in each Task Force roster (18-1) which is submitted to the IST Plans Officer
- Information in excel spreads sheet would include the following data:

- Handler Name
- Task Force Affiliation
- Contact phone number
- Contact e-mail address
- K9 name
- Search discipline (LF, HRD)

Veterinary Services

Develop a K9-specific Medical Plan (ICS 206 - K9 section) for the purpose of providing information regarding veterinary services in all areas of operations and staging should the need arise

- IST Veterinary Officer presence, location, and contact information
- Other agencies present within the area(s) of operation to include federal (NVRT), NGO (TEEX)
- Closest emergency veterinary hospitals (name, location, number) with services available 24/7 and have been confirmed open and functional (Preferred type of hospital)
- Closest additional local veterinary hospitals (name, location, number, days/time open) which may have limited hours of operation open during evening and have been confirmed open and functional
- Transportation resources in an emergency, preferably with blue-light capability (TF, police, fire, rotary wing)

K9 Specific Safety and Hazmat Message

Develop a K9-specific safety and Hazmat document (ICS 208 – K9 and ICS 208H – K9) to include the following information as a readily available resource for Handlers, Search Team Managers, Hazmat Specialists, and medical personnel. This will provide guidelines for decontamination needs as well.

- Weather as it affects K9s
- Local insects and animals
- Endemic diseases
- Water contamination concerns
- Common injuries and illnesses that are occurring to K9s during current deployment
- Hazards both expected (based on type of disaster and location) and others discovered during deployment

Daily K9 Medical Checks

Monitoring K9 health each day is the goal. Contact with every deployed K9 may not be possible, but an effort should be made to do so. Monitoring health is ideally done in person, however remote checks with handlers via text, e-mail, or radio communications is a reasonable alternative.

- In person
- Remotely via e-mail, text, call, or radio

K9 Medical Issues Report

A summary record of any issues, physical examinations, recommendations, treatments, and additional monitoring should be recorded. A single document summarizing all K9 medical interactions, rather than individual records, is acceptable. A written account is valuable for reference and to report specific information for follow-up to a home-based primary care veterinarian.