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STANDARD INSTRUCTION 02, SECTION 19

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I. PURPOSE

This document establishes operational policies and procedures for the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Canine Search Program administered through California Task Force 8 (CA-TF8) and its sponsoring agency, the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD).

II. SCOPE

This policy covers the components of the canine search program based upon both SDFD and CA-TF8 missions and operational objectives.

SDFD and CA-TF8 Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Canine Program provides canine search capabilities for structural collapse and other missions deemed necessary by the Department. This program enhances the Department's service level for local, regional, state and national responses. This policy will describe the roles and responsibilities of the Canine Search Specialist (CSS), the Canine Search Team (CST), the physical care and support of the search canine in SDFD facilities, emergency response relative to the canines, and selection of the Canine Search Team by the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation (NDSDF).

A CST is a resource for San Diego Fire-Rescue Department while on duty. Off-duty, the CSS remains a resource for CA-TF8. SDFD may request canine resources internally through the chain of command. Other local agencies may request canine search teams through the Zone or Mutual Aid process.

Participation in the program is strictly voluntary and the canines will not be the property of the City of San Diego. NDSDF remains the sole owner of the canines until their retirement. The NDSDF may take the dog back from the handler at anytime while the dog is still in service. After the dog retires, the handler will then have the option of adopting the dog or having the Foundation place the dog into a lifetime care home.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Canine

A Natural Disaster Search Dog Foundation (NDSDF) approved canine that is specially trained, has met all Department of Homeland Security (DHS / Federal Emergency MA National US&R & CAL-EMA requirements, and has received written approval from the Sponsoring Agency and CA-TF8. Such canines are at no time considered property of the Sponsoring Agency, CA-TF8 or the Canine Search Specialist. The ownership of these canines remains with the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation.

B. CANINE COORDINATOR

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An approved member of CA-TF8 assigned to assist with the Training & Administration of the Canine Search Teams. The Canine Coordinator reports to the CA-TF8 Program Manager.

C. CANINE HANDLER

See Canine Search Specialist

D. CANINE SEARCH SPECIALIST – CSS

A Sponsoring Agency and CA-TF8 approved safety member who is specially trained and is responsible for all training, veterinary care, and welfare of a canine. For purposes of this document, Canine Search Specialist, CSS and Canine Handler may be used interchangeably.

E. CANINE SEARCH TEAM – CST

A highly trained search team consisting of a canine and Canine Search Specialist, that is Task Force approved and certified by the National Disaster Search Canine Readiness Evaluation process, FEMA & CAL-EMA. Canine Search Teams are available for a variety of assignments including emergency operations and public relations activities. CST is designed to support local, regional, state and national/international search operations as single resources or as a component of CA-TF8.

F. CANINE SEARCH TEAM TRAINEE – CST- (T)

A Task Force approved team consisting of a canine and handler that is undergoing training but has not yet been certified according to the National Disaster Search Canine Readiness Evaluation process, FEMA & CAL-EMA.

G. CANINE VEHICLE

Vehicle suitable for carrying a canine team to emergency and non-emergency activities

H. CANINE CHAIN OF COMMAND

For purposes of this document, the chain of command is: Company Officer, Battalion Chief, Shift Commander, Deputy Chief of Operations, and CA-TF8 Program Manager. The Program Manager will make a determination to contact the Canine Coordinator and/or a representative from the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation when necessary

I. NATIONAL DISASTER SEARCH DOG FOUNDATION (NDSDF)

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A non-profit organization that owns, trains, supervises and assigns canines to qualified task force canine handlers for use as part of department approved Canine Search Teams.

IV. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. US&R Program Manager

1. The overall supervision of the US&R Canine Program is the responsibility of the US&R Program Manager or designee.

B. CA-TF8 Canine Coordinator

1. The overall responsibility of management of training & certification of the Canine Search Team is the CA-TF8 Canine Coordinator.

C. SDFD Company Officers

1. It is the responsibility of SDFD company officers to make every effort to ensure the canines are integrated into the station environment and facilitate discussions to defuse concerns about the presence of the canine within SDFD Operations.
2. Unresolved concerns or issues shall be forwarded through the SDFD Operations Division chain of command, beginning with the company officer through the Battalion Chief, Shift Commander, Deputy Chief of Operations and finally to the US&R Program Manager.

D. Public Information Officer (PIO)

1. It is the responsibility of the PIO (Media Services) to handle media & demonstration requests for the Canine Search Team and notify the CST through the canine chain of command.

E. CA-TF8

1. It is the responsibility of CA-TF8:
 - a. To provide the CST with an approved kennel to house the canine while at their assigned fire station & home. The primary kennel location should be an appropriate section of the fire station, i.e. apparatus floor or a location mutually agreed upon by the CSS and station captain(s).
 - 1) At no time shall the canine be left unattended in an unsecured area inside or outside of the station.

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- b. To provide food for the canine.
- c. To provide funding or reimbursement for veterinary care.
- d. To furnish all personal protective equipment (PPE) & Canine related equipment to the CSS.

F. Canine Search Specialist / Canine Search Specialist Trainee

1. Provide care for, train and maintain control of the canine at all times.
 - a. Daily canine care and training shall not interfere with the normal routine of the station or station personnel.
 - b. All canine activities will be performed during times and locations approved by the on duty captain.
 - c. Examples of daily care include:
 - 1) Washing the canine
 - 2) Trimming nails
 - 3) Picking up & properly disposing dog waste
 - d. All care and training activities shall be performed in the close proximity to the company as to not affect an emergency response.
 - e. On duty training will be limited to obedience and commands,
 - f. The CST may perform search type training only if approved by the on-duty captain.
2. Groom and inspect the canine daily.
3. Maintain and clean a fenced-in-kennel of ample size as determined by the NDSDF to afford the canine exercise, security and safety at the expense of CA-TF8.
4. Provide fresh drinking water for the canine.
5. Ensure the physical well being of the canine is maintained through proper feeding and veterinary care.

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6. Maintain a comprehensive file for all training records, licensing, vaccinations, and certifications which will be submitted monthly to CA-TF8 Training Manager.
This file must contain:
 - a. A complete medical history of the canine including vaccinations and medical procedures
 - b. Licenses and Certifications
 - c. Working history
 - d. Emergency information for the canine's veterinarian
 - e. Temporary alternate canine care provider information should the handler be unable to provide care for any reason.
7. Ensure that the CA-TF8 Program Office has a copy of all documents related to the canine handler and the assigned canine as stated above.
8. Maintain a CST logbook that includes: incident responses, training, canine vet visits, canine injuries, or exposures.
9. Record non-incident related training hours activities into Bio-Key
10. Ensure the canine is licensed, and has all current vaccinations, and rabies certifications.
11. Complete all reimbursement forms and forward them to the US&R Program Manager or appropriate designee within the prescribed timelines.
12. Keep US&R Program Manager and Canine Coordinator informed as to the status of the Canine Search Team.
13. Notify the CA-TF8 Program Manager or designee when any supplies need replacing or servicing.
14. Provide SDFD and the CA-TF8 program office a primary and secondary emergency contact person to facilitate the pick-up and care of the canine due to unexpected logistical needs and/or strike team assignments, etc.
15. Address and clarify allegations & concerns through the canine chain of command, should problems develop regarding the canine.

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16. Make every effort to attend authorized canine events, trainings and other activities scheduled and/or approved by the US&R Program Manager or designee.
17. Adhere to all policies and procedures set forth by SDFD, CA-TF8 and the NDSDF.
18. Not be exempt from performing all Departments regularly assigned duties, training and responsibilities.
19. The CSS shall not be held financially responsible for the repair of any damage the canine may create to city property.
 - a. If it is proven that negligence has occurred or if the CSS was not acting within the course and scope of their duties. the CSS may be disciplined in accordance with SDFD policies and procedures.

V. SELECTION

A. GENERAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

1. The CSS must accept that the canine will change his/her lifestyle.
 - a. This canine will live within the handler's house among family members, and will be treated as a professional team member.
 - b. The canine will report to duty along with the CSS to his / her normal duty station.
2. The CSS is expected to adhere to a rigid training schedule, as defined by the Canine Coordinator and NDSDF to ensure the development of a good working canine team.
 - a. The training expectation for this position is extremely high.
 - b. Candidates are expected to demonstrate proper time management to handle the rigorous training.
 - c. It is estimated that monthly search training drills occur once locally and twice statewide.
 - d. Obedience, command and directional training should occur 6 out of 7 days a week.

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3. It is acknowledged that any CSS, who mistreats, abuses, mishandles the canine at any time and in any way will be subjected to an investigation that may lead to disciplinary action and removal of canine by NDSDF.
4. It is acknowledged that the canine shall only be fed dog food purchased by CA-TF8 and approved by the Canine Coordinator and NDSDF. This food will be purchased in advance by CA-TF8
5. It is expected that the CSS will commit a minimum of seven years to the CA-TF8 Canine program.
6. It is acknowledged that the CSS may “opt out” of the seven-year commitment for reasons mutually agreed to by SDFD and Local 145 leading to the best interest of the Handler, Canine or Task Force.
7. It is expected that the CSS maintain a level of fitness for duty per SDFD & CA-TF8 policies and physical requirements.

B. CANINE SELECTION PROCESS:

1. The canines will be selected and pre-trained by the NDSDF.
2. The canine will remain the property of the NDSDF until the canine’s retirement.
3. The canine will not be used to work with any other Task Force without approval of the US&R Program Manager.

C. CANINE SEARCH SPECIALIST SELECTION PROCESS:

1. As positions for Canine Search Specialist become available, the CA-TF8 Program Manager will release a bulletin to employees of SDFD & CA-TF8 participating agencies.
2. SDFD applicants must be employed for a minimum of three years, have a satisfactory or above standard Employee Performance Report (EPR) during the last rating period and not be on any Performance Development Plans (PDP) or sustained discipline at time of application.
3. All individuals interested in joining the canine program will send a letter of interest with an attached CA-TF8 Application to the US&R Program Manager.
 - a. This letter should include any previous dog socialization, puppy training, obedience training, and any other dog training experience.

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4. The US&R Program Manager & the CA-TF 8 Canine Coordinator will review the application and letter of interest to determine if the candidate is qualified to continue the process.
5. All qualified applicants will then be required to attend a minimum of 10 canine training sessions as an observer so the applicant can become familiar with the canine training process.
6. Applicants will be expected to maintain a professional, courteous, and respectful demeanor toward each other, all members of the team, and members of other teams at all times.
7. All qualified individuals will proceed to an interview process. The interview panel will at minimum include a representative of the NDSDF, the CA-TF 8 Canine Coordinator, and an active Canine Search Specialist.
8. Selected applicants will then take an introductory Canine Search Specialist training course prior to receiving a canine.

VI. CANINE TRAINING:

A. GENERAL

1. The CSS will accept full responsibility to train the canine to become certified in the time line provided:
 - a. The CST will have 18 months from the time the handler and canine are partnered to pass FEMA & OES certification.
 - b. The CST will undergo a series of internal evaluations at the discretion of the Canine Search Coordinator. These evaluations will be considered proficiency evaluations and serve to troubleshoot any potential problems and seek ways to remedy them.
2. The CST will attend the FEMA Canine Search Team class at the first available funded by CA-TF8 opportunity.
3. The CSS will maintain training logs at all times. The US&R Training Manager will review these logs on a quarterly basis.
4. The CST will make every effort to attend 80% of all scheduled trainings unless excused by the CA-TF8 Canine Coordinator.

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5. A training calendar will be made available one month in advance to keep all CSS advised of the location and times of training.
6. The CSS will be expected to train six out of seven days to improve and maintain canine certification.
7. Canines may be given special additional training provided by CA-TF8 and SDFD such as, but not limited to, helicopter or boat transportation training, and rope rescue training.
8. The CSS will expose the canine to various environmental surroundings, i.e. loud noises, different smells, and unique surroundings as prescribed by NDSDF.
 - a. The canine must be socialized at all times with different people and different canines.
9. All equipment & PPE necessary for canine training will be purchased and maintained by CA-TF8. Proper PPE is required at all times.
10. On-duty training shall be done in accordance with CA-TF8 & SDFD policies. Typically this training can be provided in several short duration sessions that will not impact the routine of the on-duty company. Training shall be entered into electronic & written department, station & CSS training logs.

B. CERTIFICATION OF CANINES:

1. To meet National US&R Program mandates, all Task Force Canines must meet FEMA & OES Type I certification for deployment.
 - a. A Canine Coordinator may request a non-certified canine team to be deployed alongside the Coordinator for training purposes with the approval of the Task Force Program Manager & the requesting agency.
 - b. Attendance at any certification will only occur after the canine has successfully completed a FEMA US&R FSA.
 - c. It shall be the responsibility of the Task Force Canine Coordinator to coordinate with the US&R Program Manager in the scheduling of the FSA.
 - d. Any task force canine that has successfully completed an FSA shall be cleared to participate in selected National Task Force Canine Certification.

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2. Should a canine be on the team for a period of one year and not successfully complete an FSA, the CST will be evaluated by the task force Canine Coordinator and a representative of the NDSDF to identify training deficiencies and recommendations to enhance the CST's performance.
 - a. If after 3 additional months of training the canine is still unsuccessful in completing the mandatory FSA, the task force Canine Coordinator and the NDSDF shall identify if the canine has the ability to pass the FSA.
 - b. They shall forward this recommendation to the Task Force Program Manager in writing.
 - c. The Training Manager shall review the recommendation and forward a recommendation to the Canine Coordinator and the NDSDF to determine the future of the canine within the program and the disposition of the canine should they not remain with the CA-TF8.
 - d. At this time a handler may be given the opportunity by the US&R Program Manager, and NDSDF to be paired with another canine.

VII. CANINES AT THE FIRE STATIONS:

A. CANINE HOUSING

1. Only CA-TF8 approved CST canines and department-approved canines-in-training are authorized to be housed at the handler's assigned duty location.
2. The canine must maintain all current vaccinations before being allowed to enter the fire station.
3. The station will provide clean, healthy, and appropriate conditions for canines at all times.
 - a. Dogs will not live outside of the station or apparatus floor.
 - b. The CSS & Station Captain(s) will determine the appropriate location of kenneling.
4. If there are disagreements on the appropriate location for kenneling of the canine, the on duty Fire Captain will contact the on duty Battalion Chief and through the chain-of-command as necessary seek resolution of the issues

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5. The canine will be confined to crate or kennel unless under the direct supervision of their handler during training or socializing.
6. When multiple canines are housed at the same station, each canine will be provided their own kennel.
7. Canines will not be removed from their secured location by anyone except the handler unless instructed to do so by the handler.
8. Canines will not be left unattended without being confined in a kennel.
9. Canines may be allowed common areas of the fire station after approval from the on duty Captain.
10. Canines shall not be permitted in the sleeping areas or upon any furniture

B. DUTY

1. The canines shall work the same schedule as their handler, and must be housed at the location where the handler is assigned. The canine shall go home with the handler at the end of each work period.
2. Canines will be required to be with the handlers while on duty in the stations and be ready for deployment at all times
3. The CSS will be assigned to a monthly Task Force rotation.

C. MAINTENANCE

1. All canine handlers **MUST** clean up after their canine immediately after relieving their dog. They must clean and maintain the area designated for the canines periodically to reduce any debris, odors or nuisances caused by the canines.
2. The canine will be well groomed, brushed, clean, and free of any foul smell.
3. The handler will stow all canine related equipment at the end of their shift.

D. CONTROL

1. When the CSS is dispatched on a non-canine related incident, the canine will be confined in their kennel or will be left in care of another handler for extended incidents.

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2. An approved collar or vest will be kept on the canine at all times except when under the direct control of handler or when confined in a kennel.

E. ISSUES

1. If a living condition issue develops within the station, the handler will address the issue in a timely manner following the listed procedures:
 - a. The CSS first discusses issue with their immediate supervisor
 - b. If the situation is not resolved or the supervisor agrees the issue needs to be addressed at a higher level, the CSS will submit a letter through the chain of command to the US&R Program Manager.

F. NON CANINE SDFD PERSONNEL

1. Department personnel shall not:
 - a. Discipline canines
 - b. Feed canines unless directed to do so by the handler
 - c. Tease, strike or agitate canines
 - d. Remove canine from confinement unless instructed to do so by the handler
2. Any violation of these rules may be subject to an investigation, which may result in disciplinary action.

G. CANINE DEMONSTRATIONS:

1. Requests for CST demonstrations for public relations purposes shall be coordinated through Media Services & the US&R Program Manager.
 - a. When possible, events should be scheduled a minimum of four shifts in advance.
 - b. Media services will notify the CSS via the chain of command.

VIII. INJURIES

If the CSS is injured during on-duty training, normal department reporting procedures shall be followed.

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If the CSS is injured off-duty, immediately report through the US&R chain of command to the CA-TF8 Program Manager. The CSS shall update the CA-TF8 Program Manager as to the current deployment status of the canine team.

IX. VETERINARIAN SERVICES:

All handlers will maintain the health of the canines at all times.

Canines will be required to have an annual physical and routine veterinarian care by a CA-TF8 identified veterinarian.

The Canine Handler will adhere to the following procedure for emergency hospital issues:

1. Canine handler will contact the CA-TF8 Program Manager and advise of the issue.
2. If off duty, the canine handler will go to the pre-identified contract emergency hospital.
3. If out of the area, the CSS will contact the designed Task Force representative and request approval for veterinary care.

All approved canine vet bills will be paid for by CA-TF8.

If the canine is seriously injured, the CSS will be placed on special assignment to attend to canine immediate needs.

X. DEPLOYMENT POLICY:

A. GENERAL DEPLOYMENT INFORMATION

1. The Canine Search Team must meet the FEMA basic certification level before attaining deployable status.
 - a. The CST or CST- (T) may be dispatched or utilized on actual incidents for training purposes, with the approval of the CA-TF8 Program Manager through the Canine Coordinator.
2. Final decisions on the use of the canine shall always be at the discretion of the handler.

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3. The Canine Search Team may be requested and deployed (outside the City of San Diego) either through the county mutual aid or master mutual aid with approval of Shift Commander.
 - a. The requesting agency must have legal jurisdiction and responsibility for the search mission.
4. It is recommended that anytime a CST is requested, a CA-TF8 Search Team Manager also be dispatched.
 - a. Notifications should be made to CA-TF8 Program Manager.
 - b. The CST or SDFD Dispatch will notify SDFD Fire Station 41 (US&R) to alert them of the incident and for the vehicle request.
 - c. The CST will respond to SDFD Fire Station 41 (US&R) or to the CA-TF8 warehouse to pick up a canine vehicle.
 - d. Unless directed otherwise, the canine vehicle shall respond no-code.

B. CANINE NON-DEPLOYMENT CRITERIA

1. The Canine Search Team will not be used for:
 - a. Criminal suspects
 - b. Evidence
 - c. Incendiary devices or explosives
 - d. WMD
 - e. Hazmat
 - f. Structure fires – Accelerant Detection
 - g. Known deaths or human remains

C. DEPLOYMENT INFORMATION REQUEST

1. The following info will be requested for the deployment of the Canine Search Team:
 - a. Identity of requesting agency

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- b. Contact person
 - c. Address or location of response
 - d. Map Page
 - e. Type of search requested
 - f. Possible hazards at scene
 - g. Radio Channels
- 2. Each victim's (if known):
 - a. Number of victim's
 - b. Age
 - c. Sex
 - d. Medical/physical condition
 - e. Clothing last worn
- 3. The Canine Search Specialist shall bring the following:
 - a. Required documentation:
 - 1) Task Force identification for both handler and canine
 - 2) Vest
 - 3) Health certification
 - 4) Current rabies certification
 - 5) Travel letter from the sponsoring Task Force referencing travel information and stating the reason for driving or flying.
 - b. Required Attire:
 - 1) Task Force uniform for the handler
 - 2) FEMA vest or other identification vest for the canine

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3) Collar and leash

XI. TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS

A. GENERAL

1. During official travel, under no circumstances will a CA-TF8 search dog be left outside of an approved container or vehicle, for any period of time, without being supervised by a canine handler.
2. To promote the utmost professional appearance, the handler must travel in a uniform specified by CA-TF8.
 - a. The uniform will be clean and neat without rips, tears, or stains. CA-TF8 will provide Task Force uniforms & replace when necessary.
 - b. When using commercial airlines, the handler may substitute a soft BLACK shoe instead of the required safety boot to facilitate TSA inspections.
 - c. At no time will open toe, open back, or sandals be allowed.
 - d. Uniforms are optional during flight; however, proper SDFD & CA-TF8 identification must be available at all times.
3. The CA-TF8 canine will be secured at all times during travel. This includes off-duty transportation

B. GROUND TRANSPORTATION

1. The canine will be transported in a manner, so as not to endanger its safety or health.
2. The canine will travel in an approved, secured crate at all times.
3. Frequent stops should be made to provide the canine with breaks, water, food, etc.
4. The handler must adhere to all California Vehicle Code laws, the City of San Diego & California Task Force 8 driving policies.
5. CA-TF8 will make available a canine vehicle, which provides adequate & safe transportation for the canine.

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- a. This vehicle will be stored at the SDFD Station 41 (US&R) or CA-TF8 warehouse and available for official CSS use.
6. Canines may not be left in a vehicle for extended periods unless climate controlled situations are addressed.
 - a. When the outside temperature reaches 80 degrees Fahrenheit, consideration must be made to check on the canine on regular intervals.
7. The CSS shall ensure adequate temperature control is provided when the canine is left unattended in a vehicle.
 - a. The canine vehicle must be secured to prevent access from the outside into the container area.
8. This vehicle must be large enough (full size SUV or pick-up truck) to accommodate an approved crate(s) for transportation of the canine(s).
 - a. The crate(s) shall be secured to the vehicle to prevent it from sliding around.
9. Should the canine and crate be stored inside, the vehicle will be equipped with a temperature and carbon monoxide (CO) monitoring system, which sounds an alarm, notifying the handler before an unsafe temperature or CO level is reached inside the vehicle.
10. The vehicle assigned to the canine team must accommodate all equipment required for training and maintenance of the canine, along with any other equipment needed by the canine team.
11. This vehicle may be utilized for any official SDFD & CA-TF8 canine events, mobilizations or training.
12. Canines are not allowed on Fire Suppression Apparatus i.e. Engines, Trucks, etc unless pre-approved by the shift commander.
 - a. Canine must be secured in an approved crate while aboard the fire apparatus and adhere to all SDFD & CA-TF8 policies.

C. AIR TRANSPORTATION

1. The individual booking the air travel should inform the airline that they will be traveling with a service dog (search dog).

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2. The canine will not be transported in the cargo area of the airplane.
3. The canine is to be kept on a leash at all times while in the airport and on the airplane.
4. The canine must be aired prior to going through security.

D. HOTEL ACCOMODATIONS

The individual booking the hotel accommodations must advise the hotel that a service dog will be staying in the room.

XII. RETIREMENT / TERMINATION OF HANDLER / CANINE PARTNERSHIP:

A. GENERAL

1. The Canine can be considered retired by the NDSDF under the following conditions:
 - a. A. 10 years of age.
 - b. B. Health issues leading to a career ending injury or illness of the canine. CA-TF8 contract veterinarian will have the final say if an injury or illness is career ending for the canine.
 - c. C. Any other reason deemed necessary by the NDSDF.
2. The current handler will have first choice to adopt the canine from the NDSDF once the canine is retired.
 - a. If handler chooses not to adopt retired canine, the NDSDF will find another suitable family to adopt canine.
3. If a handler wishes to leave the canine program prior to the canine's retirement date, the canine will be relinquished to the NDSDF for re-assignment with a new handler/trainer, if the NDSDF feels the canine can make the adjustment.

B. REMOVAL AS A CANINE SEARCH SPECIALIST:

1. A CSS may be removed from the program at the discretion of NDSDF through the US&R Program Manager if investigations find any of the following to be true:

TITLE O P E R A T I O N S M A N U A L		STANDARD I N S T R U C T I O N 02		DEPARTMENT F I R E
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- a. Abuse, neglect, or lack of medical care for the canine
 - b. Failure to achieve DHS/FEMA certification within 18 months of getting the canine
 - c. Failure to attend 80% of required CST training during a 12 month period
 - d. Failure to adhere to FEMA, NDSDF, SDFD or CA-TF8 policies or procedures
 - e. Any other reason deemed necessary by the NDSDF or CA-TF8 Program Manager.
2. If the CST is removed from the US&R program or leaves the program voluntary, the canine will be returned to the NDSDF and will be re-assigned appropriately in accordance with the NDSDF and CA-TF8.