TEXAS A&M TASK FORCE 1
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

CANINE STANDBY AND RESERVE STATUS

VOLUME 1
REFERENCE NO. 1-22

1.0 PURPOSE

1.01   Maintaining an urban search and rescue canine team in top response condition requires that training be kept current. The purpose of this standard is to establish the criteria for placing a canine search team in standby or reserve status if they are unable to maintain current training.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

2.01   To ensure that the placement of Task Force canines on standby or reserve status is fair and equitable.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.01   **CSS**: Canine Search Specialist

3.02   **CSS Skill Set Hours:** TX-TF sanctioned or sponsored CSS training time. Training must be completed by both handler and canine. Both must actively participate in training for the hours to qualify.

3.03   **CST**: Canine Search Team; Canine and CSS team

3.04   **FEMA CE**: FEMA Canine Evaluation. Criteria for this test are outlined in FEMA USAR Operations Manual Annex G- Canine Search Team Certification Evaluation Handbook.

3.05   **FEMA FSA:** FEMA Foundation Skills Assessment. Criteria for this test are outlined in FEMA USAR Operations Manual Annex G- Canine Search Team Certification Evaluation Handbook.

3.06   **Proficiency Testing Administrator**: Proficiency testing may be administered by any FEMA certified CSS designated by the Canine Coordinator.

3.07   **Standby Status:** A team on standby status will be removed from Code Red and will not be first up for any deployment. A canine team listed in standby status is deployable only in the event that a roster position cannot be filled by a team that has met the training requirements outlined in this policy.

4.0 General Guidelines

4.01   **Standby Status**

4.02   A Canine Search Team can be placed on standby status for the following circumstances:

- Failure to attend recurrent CSS Skill Set Hours (minimum 16 hours per 90-day period)
- Recovery from injury or illness (as determined by the Team Veterinarian or Team Medical Director)

4.03   The CSS will be notified in writing, by the Canine Coordinator, when they are being placed on Standby Status.

4.04   When a Canine Search Team is listed in Standby Status they will be removed from Code Red. The CST will not be first up for deployments. They may be deployed if the position cannot be filled by any certified team not on Standby Status.

4.05   If the CST absence is between 90-180 days they will be asked to complete Level 1 Proficiency Testing.

4.06   If the CST absence is 180-365 days the team will be asked to complete Level 2 Proficiency Testing.

4.07   Any CST that has been on standby or reserve status for more than 365 days, will be subject to the guidelines listed in SOG 1-07 Member Participation. When requesting reinstatement and a return to full duty, the CST must meet all position and team requirements for being fully deployable and complete a FEMA sanctioned FSA and CE before returning to the deployable roster.

4.08   **Reserve Status**

4.09   A CST may request to be put on Reserve Status as outlined in SOG 1-16 (Task Force Separation and Reserve Status Policy). When requesting reinstatement and a return to full duty, the CST must meet all position and team requirements for being fully deployable and complete a FEMA sanctioned FSA and CE before returning to the deployable roster.

4.10   **Proficiency Testing**

4.11   All proficiency testing skills a CST will be required to complete will be outlined in writing by the Canine Coordinator prior to scheduling the proficiency testing.

4.12   Level 1 Proficiency Testing – Teams may be asked to perform any portion of the following:

- Any skill(s) equivalent to those required for the FEMA FSA
- Any skill(s) equivalent to any portion of the FEMA CE

4.13   Level 2 Proficiency Testing – Teams will complete all of the following:

- Skills equivalent to all FEMA FSA requirements
- Skills equivalent to the FEMA CE

4.14   Process for returning to normal deployable status

4.15   The CSS will notify the Canine Coordinator that they will be returning to training and request proficiency testing. When requesting proficiency testing the CSS will submit canine training records from any outside training they participated in during their absence. After reviewing the training logs the Canine Coordinator will outline proficiency testing requirements and schedule testing.

4.16   Proficiency testing times and locations will be scheduled by the Canine Coordinator. Special or extra-ordinary training should not be scheduled in order to accommodate proficiency testing. It should be completed during regularly scheduled training events and not take away training time from the other team members.

4.17   All proficiency testing will be administered by the Canine Coordinator or Proficiency Testing Administrator(s) designated by the Canine Coordinator.

4.18 All returning canines must obtain a new canine medical clearance letter, based on an examination by the team veterinarian prior to the completion of proficiency testing.

4.19 When proficiency testing has been successfully completed, score sheets from all proficiency testing will be placed in the team's personnel records and the team will be returned to normal deployable status.