




FEMA

**US&R GENERAL MEMORANDUM – 2020-035**

March 31, 2020

**FOR:** National Urban Search & Rescue Response System  
Task Force Representatives

**FROM:** Dean Scott, Chief  
Operations Section  
Urban Search and Rescue Branch 

**SUBJECT:** US&R General Memorandum 2020-035 – COVID-19 Related Canine Search Team Certification Expiration Date Extensions

The purpose of this General Memorandum (GM) is to provide guidance to the National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Response System (the System) regarding Canine Search Team (CST) certifications that will expire as a result of the suspension of System CST Certification Evaluations (CSTCE) due to COVID-19 impacts. This is a follow-up to GM 2020-031 – *COVID-19 Administrative Guidance* issued on March 13, 2020.

Currently within the System, the certifications of 22 CSTs – Live Find (CST-LF) and 7 CSTs – Human Remains Detection (CST-HRD) will expire by June 30, 2020. Those 29 CSTs will not have an opportunity to recertify before their expiration date due to the suspension of both the CA-TF6 and OH-TF1 CSTCEs. Given that the cancellation of the two CSTCEs is out of the control of the affected CSTs, the expiration dates for those 29 CSTs, as identified in the Systems March 2020 CST-LF and CST-HRD canine rosters, will be extended until December 31, 2020.

Although the CST's certification expirations are extended to the end of 2020, it is expected that CSTs will make every attempt to recertify at the next available CSTCE. Two CSTCEs are still scheduled for 2020, the first scheduled October 24-25, 2020 hosted by TN-TF1, and the second scheduled December 4-5, 2020 hosted by CA-TF2. The System is determining if the two suspended CST-CEs can be rescheduled before the end of year and, if all four CSTCEs are held in 2020, there will be ample opportunities for System CSTs to certify or re-certify as required.

If continued COVID-19 impacts require the suspension of additional System CSTCEs, or prevent the rescheduling of those already suspended, this issue will be reexamined for consideration of additional CST certification expiration date extensions.

Questions regarding this GM should be sent to Lance Gilmore at [lance.gilmore@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:lance.gilmore@fema.dhs.gov).

cc:

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