




FEMA

US&R GENERAL MEMORANDUM – 2020-048

June 25, 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 2020-048 – COVID-19 Related Canine Search Team Certification Expirations and Certification Evaluations

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) during the time of COVID-19 impacts. This GM is a follow-up to GM 2020-031 – *COVID-19 Administrative Guidance* and GM 2020-035 – *COVID-19 Related Canine Search Team Certification Expiration Date Extensions* issued on March 13, 2020.

- Expired CSTs identified in the Systems March 2020 CST-LF and CST-HRD canine rosters that cannot recertify due to COVID-19 related cancellations of CY 2020 System activities will remain deployable through December 31, 2020.
- When a CST that has a COVID-19 related extension of their certification as described above recertifies at a future CSTCE, their next certification expiration date will remain three years from their original expiration date and not become three years from the date of the future CSTCE they attend. This is necessary because System demand for sponsored CSTCEs is balanced over a 3-year period; compressing the all the extended expiration dates into one or two years would result in a significant increase in the number of CSTCEs needed in subsequent years that would not be sustainable.
- 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.
- 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.
- Requests to host Regional CSTCEs (LF and HRD) to recertify existing, or certify new, CSTs must meet the requirements of the *Canine Search Team Certification Evaluation Handbook, Appendix P: FEMA US&R Regional Certification Evaluation Standard Operating Procedures* issued March 25, 2020 by US&R Program Directive 2020-006.
- New CSTs that certify at a System CSTCE and meet all requirements except successful completion of the System's Canine Search Team Course will be considered deployable but



are required to complete the course as soon as possible once a System sponsored or sanctioned course is offered.

Questions regarding this GM should be sent to Lance Gilmore at lance.gilmore@fema.dhs.gov.

cc:

US&R Strategic Group
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